

2025 Land and Water Conservation Fund

Full Application Guidance

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Introduction

The [Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\) Program](#) provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities (as well as funding for shared federal land acquisition and conservation strategies). The program is intended to create and maintain a nationwide legacy of high-quality recreation areas and facilities and to stimulate non-federal investments in the protection and maintenance of recreation resources across the United States.

The LWCF program was established in January 1965 to create parks and open spaces, protect wilderness and forests, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Since then, LWCF has provided Vermont communities and state agencies with more than \$43 million towards the acquisition, conservation, and development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. LWCF helps preserve important recreation opportunities and protect environmentally sensitive areas now and for the future by providing matching grants to states for acquiring state and community parks.

LWCF Funds are derived from federal recreation fees, Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) revenues from leasing oil and gas sites in coastal waters, federal surplus real property sales, and a portion of federal motorboat fuel taxes. Funds are apportioned to federal agencies and to the 50 states and 6 territories through the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS). In Vermont, LWCF is administered by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation.

This document is intended to provide additional information for applicants who have been invited to submit a full proposal and is intended to supplement the [Federal LWCF Manual](#). Additional information about eligibility, project development, and the Pre-Application process can be found in the [2025 Pre-Application Guidance document](#) with additional information will be released later.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. Under these acts, the U.S. Department of Interior strictly prohibits discrimination because of race, color, handicap, age, or national origin in its federally assisted programs.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is an equal opportunity agency and offers all persons the benefit of participating in its programs and in competing in all areas of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual preference, or other non-merit factors.

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LWCF is a Reimbursement Program

This means that the applicant must be capable of financing the project and (after a grant agreement is fully executed) first pay for expenditures and then submit a request to the State for reimbursement using the required documentation. The program will reimburse up to 50% of eligible project costs. Recipients are responsible for providing a minimum of 50% of the total project cost (required match), meaning LWCF can only cover half the total project expenses.

Applicant Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply for LWCF grants:

- Municipalities (cities, towns, counties, etc.)
- State or Federal government agencies, other governmental entities (district or local authorities), or Tribal governments

Project sponsors must have control and tenure of the property and agree that the area within the project boundary be retained in perpetuity for public outdoor recreation use. LWCF regulations only permit funding for projects on leased land on a very limited basis.

Project Eligibility

Eligible projects for LWCF grants include:

- Acquisition of land for parks and public outdoor recreation.
- Development of new outdoor recreation facilities or renovation of existing facilities for outdoor recreation.
- A combination of the above.

2025 LWCF Timeline

- Pre-Applications open and complete application materials released: October 21, 2024
- Pre-Application submission deadline: December 13, 2024
- Full Application submission deadline: March 15, 2025
- Grant application review and selection: mid-March - May 2025
- Compliance Reviews: June - October 2025
 - Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act, state environmental permitting, state risk assessment, etc.
- Project Submission for National Park Service Review: July 2025 - January 2026
- Grant Notification and Grant Agreement Development: February - May 2026
- Anticipated Grant Implementation Period: approximately June 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028

Grant Awards and Funding Approval

Vermont receives an annual apportionment of stateside funds. The remainder is divided in half: 50% is for municipal outdoor recreation grants and 50% is for outdoor recreation projects on state lands, usually state parks. While FPR has not hosted a community grant round since 2021, we have been carefully tracking this balance and we anticipate awarding approximately \$3.3 million in the 2025 LWCF Grant Round.

For the 2025 LWCF Grant Round, we recommend submitting projects that request \$25,000 to \$1,000,000 in funding from LWCF (total project costs ranging from \$50,000-\$2,000,000+). We anticipate that selected projects will be distributed across this funding range.

Project applications are reviewed and scored by a project application Ranking Committee following the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) using established criteria. The resulting recommendations are reviewed and approved by the Ranking Committee. All applications must meet an identified need within the [Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#) and address local and regional needs. Municipalities must agree to dedicate the park or area where the project is located for public outdoor recreational use in perpetuity. In addition, the grantee must also agree to develop, operate, and maintain the development to meet acceptable NPS standards for public outdoor recreation. Grants are subject to approval by the NPS.

After securing federal funding approval, FPR can fully execute grant agreements. Once grant agreements are executed, awarded applicants become “project sponsors,” “sub-recipients,” or “grantees.”

All project sponsors MUST wait for a fully executed grant agreement before beginning their project.

The grant agreement will include grant details of the funding amount, match requirements, scope of work, payment provisions, and other project requirements of the project. It will include both state and federal provisions, which will be included in this Full Application guidance. Projects must demonstrate compliance with state and federal regulations including but not limited to:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Endangered Species Act
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
- Executive Orders and Federal Legislation (which include but are not limited to Floodplain Management, Wetlands Protection, Build America/Buy America, Civil Rights Act)
- The [State’s Permitting Processes](#)

Each project sponsor is responsible for completing environmental reviews prior to construction and maintenance in accordance with federal and state regulations. In addition, there are fiscal compliance requirements, including Act 154 Certificates of Good Standing, state risk assessment, W-9s, and Certificate of Insurance requirements. See “SECTION 6: Compliance Information” and the [“Sample LWCF Grant Agreement”](#) for additional information.

How to Apply

This year, there is a two-step application process that begins with a short Pre-Application initial submission. Select applicants will then be invited to submit a proposal for full review.

Pre-Application Submission

Pre-Applications were due **11:59 PM on December 13, 2024**. See the [2025 LWCF Project Development and Pre-Application Guidance](#) for additional information about that process. Incomplete applications and Pre-Applications received after this deadline are ineligible.

How to Submit a Full Proposal

If you are invited to submit a full proposal, the Full Application Form will be offered through the [ANROnline portal](#). To complete your full grant application, you will need to follow the steps below.

1. Download, review, and complete all other required templates and supplemental materials for your project.
 - a. [2025 LWCF Full Application Preview](#)
 - b. [Full Application Attachments Checklist](#)
2. Complete the LWCF Grant Application Form and submit it online after the application period opens.

All downloadable documents are located on the [LWCF webpage](#).

When ready, select the “Begin Form Entry” button to complete the Full Application Form. Your application is **due no later than 11:59 PM EST on March 15, 2025**. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

If this is your first time logging in, you will have to select the “Register an Account” button and fill out the required information to create a user profile. Registering as a user will allow you to save information in the online form as you fill out your application and receive reminder and confirmation emails about your application.

Application Tip: We strongly recommend that applicants develop responses to application questions in a separate document. A [MS Word template](#) is available online to assist you in drafting. Once you begin your application online, you will be able to return to your application to review or edit your responses, but it is easier to draft and refine language outside the application portal and then copy/paste into the online application. That separate document can also serve as a copy of your responses for your records.

Please check out the [LWCF website](#) for more information about the grant program. Questions regarding the application can be directed to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.gov with the title “LWCF Grant Application Question.”

Application Support

Full Application Grant Program Webinar

Thursday, January 16, 2025, 1:00-2:00 PM

This webinar will be exclusively for applicants who have been invited to submit a full proposal. This webinar will cover some of the logistical expectations about managing an LWCF grant including financial tracking, reporting, federal compliance reviews, and other administrative requirements. The purpose of this presentation is to inform applicants of what to expect in terms of managing their grant so they can adjust plans as needed prior to submitting their full proposals. There will be time at the end of the session for questions from attendees.

The link to attend will be emailed to all applicants invited to submit a Full Application. The webinar will be recorded and emailed to all invited applicants afterward.

Open Office Hours

Thursday, February 13, 2025, 2:00-3:00 PM

Thursday, March 6, 2025, 2:30-3:30 PM

FPR Staff will host two virtual open office sessions exclusively for applicants invited to submit a full proposal to learn more details about the grant program and ask questions. **The links to attend will be emailed to all applicants invited to submit a Full Application.** Open office hours will be recorded and emailed to invited applicants afterward.

If the webinar and open office hours don't work for you, please email us at

ANR.FPRrecreationgrants@vermont.gov.

Additional Technical Support

Municipal Technical Assistance Program

Towns that need help with grant development, management, or administration, can get support from the State of Vermont's [Municipal Technical Assistance Program](#). The program is intended to assist communities that have a limited capacity for accessing and applying for state and federal grants. To be eligible for this program, towns must be pre-approved by the Vermont Agency of Administration. Here is the current list of [pre-approved of towns](#). If you have further questions about how this program can help, please email the Vermont Agency of Administration at ADM.ARPAMuniAssist@vermont.gov.

Rural Economic Development Initiative

Applicants may be eligible for grant review/editing assistance during **Full Application stage** through the [Rural Economic Development Initiative](#) (REDI), a program of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB). To qualify for assistance through REDI, the project must be located in or primarily serving a community with a population of less than 5,000 people. If you qualify and are interested in application review assistance from the REDI program, please complete the [REDI Inquiry Form](#) by December 31st.

Additional Resources

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns offers a list of strategies and resources for increasing municipal capacity for grants on their [website](#).

Review and Selection

The LWCF ranking and review process follows Vermont's [Open Project Selection Process \(OPSP\)](#).

Pre-Application Review

Pre-Applications were reviewed by the FPR Staff team, who checked for project eligibility, feasibility, readiness, and compliance with any applicable federal LWCF requirements.

Applicants whose Pre-Applications demonstrate all the above characteristics have been invited to submit a Full Application. If you were invited to submit a full proposal, FPR staff shared feedback and any questions that come up about your proposal. We strongly recommend you plan to adjust your project and/or materials in your Full Application to address any questions or comments from the Pre-Application review.

Full Application Screening

Applications for LWCF assistance will first be reviewed by FPR staff to ensure they meet minimum eligibility requirements and completeness. Applications that fail the initial screening will not be forwarded to the Ranking Committee for further review. Eligible project applications must include the following:

- Both the applicant and project must meet the eligibility requirements of the most current [NPS LWCF Manual](#).
- Applications must be complete and submitted prior to the application deadline.
- The project must be permittable and the recreation benefit must outweigh any potential negative environmental impacts.
- Adequate control and tenure of lands must be established, including the project site as well as lands within the LWCF project boundary area. Control and tenure may be demonstrated by:
 - fee simple ownership of all project lands without encumbrances;
 - a lease from the Federal government with a remaining term of 25 years or more;
 - applicants may also have partial ownership (e.g., conservation easement) provided the ownership arrangement mandates and maintains appropriate outdoor recreation access in perpetuity.

Full Application Review

Applications will then be reviewed by a Ranking Committee of key State of Vermont staff and select municipal parks and recreation leaders. The committee will use the following rubric as a guide for making recommendations for project selection:

- Project Planning, Readiness, and Feasibility (40 Points)
 - Is the timeline, budget expectations, and permitting needs realistic, clear, appropriate to the scope of work, and suggest a high opportunity for successful completion with the permitted time and grant award amounts?
 - Is the project “shovel ready” or is the acquisition “purchase ready”? Does the workplan include a sufficient level of detail to indicate an in-depth planning process?
 - For Development projects: has the applicant completed all required Section 106 and NEPA compliance? Has the applicant secured all relevant permits or have a clear plan to secure all required permits?

- For Acquisition projects: does the applicant have a UASFLA Appraisal completed within the past year and a purchase agreement?
- Does the budget demonstrate efficient use of funds? Are project cost estimates thorough, detailed, reasonable and well supported by recent estimates? Does the applicant have the majority of match funding already committed or a clear and realistic plan to secure the funds?
- Does the applicant have the capacity to complete the project? Do they have a history of successful past grant management for comparable projects?
- Connection to state, regional and local planning efforts (40 points)
 - How well does the project align with the vision of the [SCORP](#), to foster healthy and vibrant communities through outdoor recreation?
 - Does the project address priorities in other local, regional, or state plans?
 - Does this project have documented community support? Was the public engaged in project selection and development?
 - Does this project invest in stewarding and upgrading existing recreational resources, or does this project develop recreational opportunities and conserve open spaces that strategically fill gaps in experiences and distribution across the state?
- Stewardship (30 points)
 - How well does the design incorporate climate resilient strategies?
 - Are the plans for stewardship and maintenance comprehensive, reasonable, and well-articulated? Does the project have long-term commitments from skilled organizations to support maintenance and stewardship?
 - How does this project cultivate and promote a stewardship ethic among Vermonters and visitors?
- Wellness (30 points)
 - How well does this project create and enhance in-community outdoor recreation opportunities that directly connect to where people live, learn, and work?
 - Does this project create safe, welcoming, and environmentally sustainable entry spaces into the outdoors?
 - How well does this project expand or improve recreation opportunities to underserved populations including minority populations, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations?

The Ranking Committee will consider both the quantitative scores as described above, as well as qualitative assessments about the following grant priorities during the selection process, including but not limited to:

- Geographic distribution of selected projects
- Distribution of recreation types across selected projects
- Access for underserved communities identified through state and federal processes
- Previous history regarding project sponsor compliance with LWCF program requirements
- Reported progress of any other active LWCF, RTP, or other FPR grant projects from the applicants

Final Selection

Projects recommended for funding will be ranked based on the above scoring, priority ranking, and allocation rules. Following this selection, applicants move to the compliance review phase and must complete all required environmental reviews and federal compliance checks, including but not limited to:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Endangered Species Act
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

Additional Information: For full details of environmental review and federal compliance, be sure to read the [Federal LWCF Manual](#). In particular, review “Proposals, Environmental Review and Federal Compliance” (Chapter 4).

After all required reviews and compliance is complete, FPR will develop application packages and seek funding approval from the National Park Service (NPS) for the recommended grant projects. Once NPS approves the funding, FPR’s Business Office must then process the final grant agreement between FPR and each grantee to confirm the grant award.

Important Note: NPS authorization may take anywhere from one to six months.

Application Content

Application Tip: There are character limits on all long-form response questions in the Full Application [online](#). When considering character limits please know that **a space is considered as its own character**. If your response exceeds the character limit for a question you will see an error message. If you exceed the character limit, please shorten your response and resubmit.

SECTION 1: Applicant and Project Information

This is the section to share all required information about the applicant and the project. It will include the contact information of the municipality or other governmental entity, the contact information of the project manager, and pertinent information about the project.

Contact Information

Provide information for the municipal or other governmental entity applying for this grant. This should be the entity that will sign the grant agreement and who will be responsible for submitting reports and reimbursement requests. If you are submitting a grant that will be implemented by a partnership, you should enter the landowner entity's information as the lead applicant unless otherwise directed by FPR Grants staff.

Select the applicant type that best fits the lead applicant:

- Municipality: towns, cities, school districts, water districts, park districts, etc.
- Other Government Entity: State government agencies, other governmental entities (district or local authorities), or tribal governments

For the address, please include the information for your main office/legal address; you will have space later in this form to share project locations.

You will also be required to enter your organization's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and the end month of your fiscal year. You do NOT have to maintain an active SAM registration to receive an LWCF grant – only to have an "ID Assigned" so that you have a UEI.

Application Tip: Getting a UEI the first time can be an extended process! If you do not already have a UEI, please begin the process of registering as soon as possible at <https://sam.gov>

Please note that we ask for contact information for both the project contact and the authorized representative for the organization.

Project Contact	Authorized Representative
<p>The person FPR will contact about any questions related to the project once it has started. Not necessarily the person actually implementing the work – but the person who is monitoring the project’s progress and expenses.</p>	<p>The person who has the legal authority to sign the grant agreement.</p>
<p>Can be staff/volunteer of the applying entity or designated member of a core municipal/government/nonprofit partner. Cannot be a private business representative that will potentially be contracted for services, as all private business contracts need to follow procurement requirements.</p>	<p>This is an appointed or elected official or designated staff member of the lead applicant entity – it cannot be a partner representative. For towns, this is often a Selectboard Chair or Town Manager.</p>

Key Project information

Project Title

Please choose a project title that concisely describes the project including the main activity and the general project location, such as park name or town name.

Example Project Title: “ABC Park Land Acquisition” or “XYZ Town Playground Construction.”

Project Location

Project locations should be as specific as possible and identify city/town, and county. Use the built-in map in the online application to identify GPS coordinates for your project location.

Budget Overview

Enter the amount of funding you are requesting from the LWCF program. You will also enter the total value of your match (including non-monetary donations of labor or materials, state funds, local cash or in-kind contributions, or private contributions – see the Budget section of this Guidance for additional information). Then, enter your total project cost, which includes both your LWCF request plus your total match.

Application Tip: Make sure the numbers you enter in the application match your budget!

LWCF grants require a minimum 50% match. In this application question, enter the automatically calculated match from the budget worksheet. Alternatively: To calculate the percentage of match, divide the value of your match by the total project cost and multiply by 100. Round your answer to the nearest tenth.

$$(\text{Total Match Value}) / (\text{Total Project Cost}) \times 100$$

Example: A project asking \$50,000 from LWCF with a \$60,000 match has a match rate of 54.5%.

$$(\$60,000 \text{ match}) / (\$110,000 \text{ Total Project}) \times 100 = 54.5\%$$

Brief description of project

Provide a 1-3 sentence brief summary of your project, up to 150 words. Be sure to clearly summarize what you plan to do, where you plan to do it, and a high-level overview of why this project is important.

Example: “The Town of Anywhere plans to replace two existing tennis courts that are beyond their useful life with four new pickleball courts. The tennis courts have not been used consistently for years, and our town’s recreation department receives weekly requests from the community for pickleball. In addition, we will be installing lighting at the new courts and the parking lots that serve the courts to improve safety and increase the hours the courts are available for use.”

SECTION 2: General Project Information

The applicant will be prompted to share materials related to project planning, readiness, and feasibility. Applicants can use this section to demonstrate their capacity to carry out the project and to show that the project is well thought-out and planned for success.

All required templates, guidance and checklist documents can be downloaded from the [LWCF webpage](#). Failure to provide documents where needed will result in an incomplete application, which will not be eligible for consideration for this grant round.

Project Workplan

The applicant will be required to submit the “LWCF Workplan Template” with the tasks, activities, and performance measures for the project. A workplan outlines all the components of your project and should provide enough of a description to understand what work will be done where and how it will get done. Your workplan will be used to develop the grant agreement if your project is awarded a grant.

You may make changes to the workplan submitted during the Pre-Application phase, but your final project should be very similar to your original proposal. Your revised workplan should address feedback received during the Pre-Application review, additional information learned about the LWCF program, and/or adjustments to plans based on your internal needs. If you have no modifications, you may resubmit the same workplan as during the Pre-Application phase. **If you submit a project during the Full Application phase that is substantially different from your Pre-Application, your application may be disqualified.** Email ANR.FPRrecreationgrants@vermont.gov with any questions.

Review the “Project Workplan” section of the [Pre-Application Guidance](#) for information on how to complete the template.

Submitted files should be clearly titled using the following format:

- 2025_Workplan_[Name of Applicant Organization]

Example Workplan File Name: 2025_Workplan_ABC Town

Application Tip: All uploaded application files will be visible to reviewers in a single folder. The purpose of these provided naming structures is to make it as easy as possible for reviewers to find what they are looking for in your files. Do NOT worry about minor formatting discrepancies, such as using underscores vs. dashes vs. spaces or whether or not you include “LWCF” in your file name.

Then in the application form, briefly describe the applicant’s recent experience completing similar projects. Describe any relevant projects within the last 5-7 years that are similar in scope or scale. Be sure to highlight any previous experience managing federal grants. This experience can be at the organizational level (for example, projects an applying town has completed) or at the individual level (for example, projects successfully managed by the core project team).

Project Budget

Grant applicants will need to itemize project costs on the provided budget template and upload this template as a part of the application. The template is already configured to automatically calculate subtotals and percentages – so please only enter text in the outlined cells with a white background in the appropriate categories that are relevant to your project.

You may make changes to the budget submitted during the Pre-Application phase. Your revised budget should address feedback received during the Pre-Application review, additional information learned about the LWCF program, and/or adjustments to plans based on your internal needs. If you have no changes from the Pre-Application phase, you may resubmit the same budget.

Remember, LWCF is a reimbursement program, so you need to secure funds in advance to pay for all project expenses when they occur. You will be able to seek reimbursement on a quarterly basis at maximum, and reimbursement can take 4-8 weeks to complete, so plan accordingly.

Review the “Project Budget” section of the [Pre-Application Guidance](#) for information on eligible and ineligible expenses and how to complete the budget template.

Please submit the budget template in Excel format (.xls or .xlsx file type).

Submitted Budget Forms will need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- 2025 Budget - [Name of Applicant]

Example Budget File Name: 2025 Budget – ABC Town

Budget Match Narrative

LWCF grants require a minimum 50% match of the **total project cost** (LWCF request + your matching funds = total project cost). Review the “Project Budget” section of the [Pre-Application Guidance](#) for information on how to calculate this.

After you upload your budget, BRIEFLY describe the sources of match and the status of that match. Describe the total match contributions by source. If you have not confirmed match, use this section to outline your plan to secure match by source. For each match contribution, be sure to describe.

- Who is providing the match by source? Be sure to clearly identify the general source of match for each contributor: state, federal, local, or private. We ask you to do this because this is something we’re required to submit to the FHWA if your project is selected. Types of funding sources:
 - State funds: other state grants/funds. Identify grants/funds by name.
 - Local contributions: Municipality’s direct monetary contribution; (e.g., cash from fund-raising efforts, organizational or municipal funds, local tax revenues, set-aside project funds, force-fund accounts of town/organizational labor forces, local business, private or public contributions etc.) or in-kind contributions from local government entities.

- Private contributions (e.g. nonprofit organization cash, donations from individuals, cash or in-kind support from businesses) and other non-governmental grants (e.g., foundation grants, local non-profit organizational grants, awards).
 - Name nonprofits, foundations, and private businesses as relevant. Use GENERAL terms for contributions from individuals, such as “individual donations” or “volunteers” – do NOT name private donors.
- Other Federal Funds: There are strict limitations on the use of federal funds as sponsor match for LWCF (see “Federal matching and supplemental programs” on page 71 of the [Federal LWCF Manual](#)). The only federal funds allowed as match for LWCF are the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trail Program (RTP) Grants and Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Community Block Grants. **All other federal funding, including FEMA, CARES Act, ARPA, and other pandemic-related federal relief funds, cannot be used as match.**
- The total contribution for each source.
- The general type of funding (ex: cash, in-kind labor, grant, donated material, etc.).
- Whether the match is as committed or pending.
 - “Committed” match funding has been designated, promised, or approved to support this project; common examples include, but are not limited to, pledged donations, existing cash reserves, allocations in approved budgets, and grants received.
 - “Pending” match describes support that would support this project that has not yet been committed; common examples include: other submitted grant proposals currently under review, volunteers that still need to be recruited, future budget allocations that have not been approved. If known, describe when you’ll know when you’ll confirm any pending sources.

If you have any ineligible expenses “costs not allowable for participation” in your budget, explain briefly why these are included in your budget and the sources of funding that will cover those expenses.

Example Budget Match Narrative - based on the sample budget in the Pre-Application Guidance:

“Anytown will be contributing a total of \$125,000 in match. Of this, \$100,000 is a local in-kind land donation that has been pledged from the school district. The Town has committed to contributing an additional \$10,125 in local match through in-kind staff labor and town-owned equipment. We have budgeted \$2,010 in in-kind volunteer labor; this private match is pending as the volunteers will not be confirmed until 2028, after the contractors’ work is complete. The remaining \$12,865 in match will be allocated through FY26 or FY27 town budgets as local cash match; this funding is pending until the Selectboard approves the budget for the upcoming year each March.

In addition, the town has an existing reserve of \$50,000 that the Selectboard approved in 2024 for use as contingencies related to unforeseen expenses and any future project modifications. While these types of contingencies are not eligible for LWCF, the Town Manager requested the Selectboard’s approval of these funds as a demonstration of the Town’s commitment to ensuring the successful completion of this project should plans need to change based on field assessments.”

Project Maps

For LWCF applications, all projects are required to submit a project location map and a proposed LWCF Boundary Map.

Project Location Map

You must provide a map that shows your project's location in the state. This map is used to help understand the context of a project within its community and for environmental and archaeological reviews.

Project Location Map must include (according to the [Federal LWCF Manual](#), v71 Ch.6.B.5)

- Location of Site
- Entrance to the Site

Helpful to include:

- Location of the site within the state
- Location of the site within the county
- Location of the site within the municipality
- Latitude/longitude coordinates of the primary entrance/exit
- Street address of the park
- Map title with project name
- North arrow
- Scale
- Map legend that clearly identifies map symbols (specify "existing" v. "proposed")
- Any other relevant features: waterways, bodies of water, prominent landmarks

Uploaded maps will need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- 2025_LocationMap_[Name of applicant organization]

Example Map File Name: 2025_LocationMap_Any Town

LWCF Boundary Map

The LWCF Boundary Area Map clearly delineates the area to be subject to encumbrance by the LWCF Act. This area will be protected under Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act, which states that property acquired or developed with LWCF money shall not be converted to uses other than public outdoor recreation. This protection is in perpetuity.

As per the [Federal LWCF Manual](#), v71 Ch.6.B.4 (page 80), an acceptable LWCF boundary area map is required for all development and combination projects prior to NPS approval, and for acquisition projects, prior to reimbursement. This map helps to ensure that everyone understands the area being put into permanent outdoor recreation and avoids unintentional conversions of use in the future.

Prior to adopting boundary maps, it was generally understood that the entirety of a park, no matter how large, was encumbered when any LWCF funds were accepted for a project at the park. As parks often grow over time, and without a clear map, it is difficult to know what acres were added to the park after LWCF-assisted projects were completed.

How To Define the 6(f) Boundary

The 6(f) map notes the boundaries of the park that is being assisted with LWCF funds, and **must encompass a viable public outdoor recreation area that is capable of being self-supporting without reliance upon adjoining or additional areas not identified in the project scope (such as for access, utilities, park support facilities, etc.).**

Consistent with the intent of the LWCF Act, the Program expectation is the entirety of the park or recreation area being acquired, developed, or expanded will be included within the LWCF boundary area. Thus, the boundary area is often an entire parcel or multiple parcels.

Exceptions for boundaries that would apply to a lesser area may be considered only when it can be shown the area is self-supporting. These requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the NPS prior to the award of a grant. Early coordination is strongly recommended. For acquisitions, in no case will the LWCF boundary area be less than that acquired with LWCF assistance. In all cases, **6(f) boundary areas must ensure public access by including parking lots, walkways to parking areas, or access roads.**

The LWCF boundary area map and/or attachments as appropriate must include sufficient detail so as to legally identify the lands to be subject to the provisions of the LWCF Act. The following methods of identification are acceptable:

- Deed references
- Adjoining ownerships
- Adjoining easements and rights-of-way
- Public streets
- Adjoining water bodies or other natural landmarks
- Metes and bounds
- Surveys

Town parcel maps or tax maps are often used for 6(f) boundary maps because the metes and bounds are indicated on the map. If measurements are not available for the proposed site, a map can be created by the sponsor. Remember that although a formal survey is not required, the 6(f) boundary map must be drawn from actual fixed points on the property (i.e. iron pins, concrete monuments, water lines, and/or other permanent landmarks).

Non-recreational facilities should not be included within the 6(f) area. For example, a school building, town maintenance building or community center would be excluded along with a sufficient buffer (50 feet) to accommodate potential expansion. Structures directly related to recreation may be included. However, it is helpful if the non-recreational structures are included in the map for reference.

6(f) Map Requirements

Per the [Federal LWCF Manual](#), v71 Ch.6.B.4, 6(f) Maps must include:

- Park/Site Name
- Site Location (Address)
- Parcel Number(s)/Deed References/Sufficient detail to legally identify the park boundary
- North Arrow
- Total Acreage of the encumbered area
- Areas that use symbols **in addition to** color for delineation (such as dotted lines). Avoid use of color as the only means to delineate areas.
- If applicable:
 - Known easements, deed/lease restrictions, and reversionary interests
 - Identified areas under lease with name of lessor(s) and lessee(s), and term remaining on the lease(s).

Helpful to include:

- Satellite Imagery
- County, state
- Latitude/longitude coordinates of the primary entrance/exit(s)
- Parcel owner name(s) for parcels within boundary
- Scale
- Map legend that clearly identifies map symbols (specify “existing” v. “proposed”)
- Any other relevant features: roads, waterways, bodies of water, prominent landmarks, structures (buildings, bridges, campsites, etc.)
- If the site has previously received LWCF funding, if applicable/known:
 - Other/previous park names
 - Past LWCF grant numbers
 - Previously encumbered acres
 - Newly encumbered acres

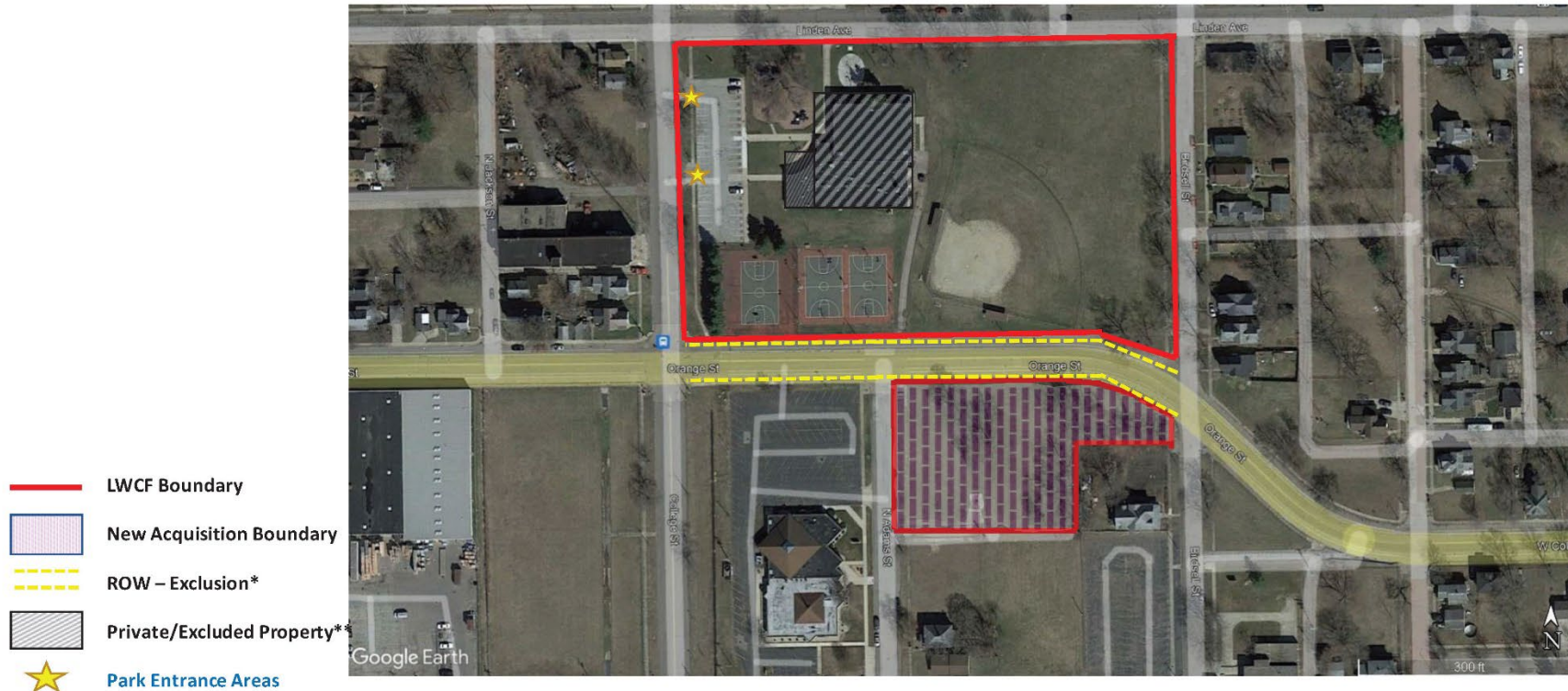
Note: The 6(f)(3) Legal Boundary Map and Site Development Plan or Acquisition Map may be combined if all components can be cleanly and clearly presented. In this case, the map should be titled with both map types (ex: 6fMap.AcquisitionMap).

Uploaded maps will need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- 2025_6fMap_[Name of applicant organization]

Example Map File Name: 2025_6fMap_Any Town

00-00002 Example City Park Expansion LWCF Boundary Map



*(Add ROW exclusion lines with a note on width and length of the ROW being excluded)

** (Add a note/label about these parcels – who owns it – why excluded – do they have a ROW to access?)

Note: This map was generated using only Google Earth and MS PowerPoint.

LWCF Boundary Map		Project Name:	<u>Example City Park Expansion</u>
Park/Site Name	<u>Example City Park</u>	County, State:	<u>American County, Example State</u>
Site Location:	<u>1234 Linden Ave, Somewhere, ES</u>	Lat/Long:	<u>41°67'78.78"N, 86°27'45.1"W</u>
LWCF Project #:	<u>00-00002</u>	Other/Previous Park Names:	<u>Example Small Town Park</u>
Total Acres Encumbered:	<u>7.5 Acres</u>	Parcel/Deed Reference Number:	<u></u>
Map Date: xx/xx/xxxx	<u>03/13/2023</u>	Past LWCF Grant(s) #:	<u>00-00001</u>
Signature (A)SLO:	<u>Bartleby Scrivener,</u>	Previously Encumbered Acres:	<u>5 Acres (00-00001)</u>
<i>Bartleby Scrivener</i>		Newly Encumbered Acres (Project #):	<u>2.5 Acres (00-00002)</u>

Description and Notification Form

All grant applicants will need to submit a completed copy of the Description and Notification Form (DNF). The DNF captures information about LWCF grants and the parks and recreation areas assisted through the grant program.

FPR has prepared [a fillable version of the DNF](#) for applicants to use, as there are only certain fields we need applicants to complete. Applicants should provide the following:

- Co-Sponsor Agency = lead applicant’s name
- Co-Sponsor Address = lead applicant’s address
- Project Type
- Sponsor Type
- Number of Parks included in the proposal
- Acreage Acquired – for acquisitions only. Skip if not applicable.
- Donated Acres – if applicable. Skip if not applicable.
- Federal Acquisition \$ Share – for acquisitions only. Skip if not applicable.
- Federal Acquisition % Share – for acquisitions only. Skip if not applicable.
- Source of Match – all projects must answer this
- All “Park Information” questions
 - For projects with multiple sites, complete the additional Park Information chart for as many sites as relevant.

Additional federal instructions about the fields in the form are included at the end of that document. Please do NOT complete any other fields on this form at this time. These additional fields will be completed by FPR staff if your project is selected for submission to the National Park Service.

Uploaded Description and Notification Forms will need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- 2025_DNF_[Name of applicant organization]

Example Map File Name: 2025_DNF_Any Town

SECTION 3: Acquisition Information

If you select “yes” to the question that asks if your project includes land acquisition at the end of Section 2, you will see an additional section of questions appear. If you select “no” to this question, you will skip this entire section.

Application Tip: In the application form, you will be asked a series of questions. Depending on your responses, you will be directed to questions prompting you to upload documents or answer additional questions. Because of the complexity of this question flow, land acquisition questions are best reviewed in the online application before you begin drafting in the MS Word preview version.

In Vermont, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program has assisted with the acquisition of thousands of acres dedicated to outdoor recreation and the conservation of unique or endangered plant and animal habitat. The most common method of acquiring property is by fee simple title. This is the preferred method of acquisition since it gives the holder an absolute right to the property within limitations imposed by state or federal law. In some instances, the sponsor may wish to purchase less than fee simple title, such as easements, rights-of-way and title subject to deed restrictions. This would be permissible when fee simple is excessively expensive and lesser control of the area will not detract from recreational use of the land.

The federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended under 49 U.S.C. 4601 (Uniform Act) applies to all LWCF-funded acquisitions.

The types of information applicants will need to be prepared to share for acquisition projects include:

- General parcel information
- Fair market value of the property the applicant wishes to acquire with funding
- Appraisal information, including report from a certified appraiser
- Purchase and Sales Agreement information
- Information about title work completed
- Information about any liens, restrictions, easements, or covenants on the property
- Information about any encumbrances on the property that could impact the public’s use, recreational value, or the purpose for which the property is being acquired
- Information about property boundaries

Your files should be clearly titled to describe the year, file description, and applicant's name.

- 2025_ [Appraisal / Purchase Agreement / Title Report]_[Name of Applicant Organization]

Example Acquisition File Name: 2025_Title Report_ ABC Town

General Acquisition Information

The Acquisition section begins with general information about the parcel to be acquired. If your project includes both acquisition and development on separate parcels, only describe the parcel to be acquired in this section.

- Parcel Name
- Type of acquisition: Fee simple, Fee Acquisition with an Easement, Permanent Public Access Easement
- Describe the existing resources and features of the site that make it desirable for public outdoor recreation. Describe the aspects of *this parcel* that make it important to acquire.
- When will access to the site for public outdoor recreation become available? Be as specific as possible. If it will be open as of your closing date that has already been determined, list that. Otherwise, list the anticipated month and year.
- Are any buildings or structures being purchased along with the property? If so, describe what is planned for those structures and whether the grant-funded acquisition includes the value of those structures. Because of its statutory emphasis on public outdoor recreation, LWCF funding may be used to acquire a structure only if it will be used to support or is necessary to achieve the outdoor recreation goal for the site (e.g., a garage or storage building that can be converted to an operation and maintenance shed). Please note: the NPS will need to be consulted about the eligibility of a structure for acquisition assistance, so if an acquisition project with a building is selected to move forward, there will be additional steps in the review.
- Is this property being acquired under threat of condemnation? If so, explain the threat of condemnation.

Acquisition Maps

Grant applicants must submit a map that clearly outlines the parcel to be acquired. If the 6(f) Map clearly shows this, you can upload the same map again. *In this case, the map should be titled with both map types (ex: 6fMap.Acquisition Map).*

However, if you need to develop a separate Acquisition Map to clearly identify the parcel to be acquired, you must submit a map with all the same [requirements as the 6\(f\) map](#). Be sure to clearly identify the current owner(s) of the parcel(s) on the map.

If you have a separate Acquisition Map, uploaded maps will need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- 2025_AcquisitionMap_[Name of applicant organization]

Example Map File Name: 2025_AcquisitionMap_Any Town

Fair Market Value

Applicants acquiring property or interests in property (e.g., easements) will be required to substantiate the value of that interest before full grant funds can be used to reimburse for acquisition costs. Obtaining an independent appraisal by a qualified appraiser that meets the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (UASFLA) is required unless the interest to be acquired is below \$10,000. Appraisals for acquisitions valued \$10,000-\$25,000 are not required if the owner waives their right to an appraisal. In this case, obtaining a market analysis and providing a justification for not needing a UASFLA appraisal is needed.

Application Tip: For all acquisitions valued over \$25,000, you **MUST** submit a complete appraisal of the property that meets the “Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions,” also commonly known as “yellow book” standards before your project can be reviewed by the National Park Service. A copy of this document may be found at <http://www.justice.gov/enrd/land-ack/Uniform-Appraisal-Standards.pdf>.

The application offers places to upload any completed documentation and/or plans to secure any additional documentation related to fair market value.

Purchase and Sales Agreement

Applicants acquiring any property or easement will be required to demonstrate that they can complete the acquisition in the two-and-a-half-year grant period. Applicants will be required to demonstrate landowner commitment to sell the property, ideally through a purchase and sales agreement.

Title Work, Restrictions, Boundaries

Applicants will also be required to demonstrate that they have inspected the title, restrictions, and boundaries of the property to ensure that any legal or physical conditions do not infringe on the purposes for which the property is being acquired. Please note: Any restrictions on the property that could prevent it from being available for recreational purposes of the grant at any time may render the project ineligible.

Application Tip: If selected to receive LWCF assistance, you must also submit a title report to the State well in advance of your closing date so that we may complete a legal review of all interests on the property.

At the end of the Acquisition section, if you select “yes” to the question that asks if your project includes development you will see a whole additional section of questions appear. If you select “no” to this question, you will skip the entire Development section.

SECTION 4: Development Information

Development Plan

Grant applicants will need to submit a site development plan that shows all proposed project components. This can be a professionally created design plan or it can be a detailed map that depicts the project location and clearly highlights/marks all site locations of the workplan, including components, structures and performance measures site and provides a legend to understand what components will be done at what locations.

Site Development Plan Checklist:

- Clearly labeled locations for all individual construction components
- Trail(s) where work is to be done and any other connecting trails within the map area
- Parking/trailhead locations
- Labeled staging and access areas for construction
- Parcel boundaries for whole map area
- Streams and wetlands
- Names for trails, city/towns, rivers, lakes in your map area
- North arrow
- Any other pertinent features depending on the project including: parking areas/access if within the map area, indications of trail difficulty or use, topo lines or other indications of slope, soils, known rare species locations, structures (buildings, bridges, campsites, etc.)

Helpful to include:

- Satellite Imagery
- Area of Potential Effect (APE)
- Overlay of known floodplains (if present)
- Overlay of known wetlands (if present)
- Overlay of known archeological sites (if present)
- Overlay of known critical habitat of Threatened and Endangered Species (if present)
- Overlay of known easements and/or leases (if present)

Application Tip: Depending on the scale of the project and the mapping software used, you may submit one map file that covers the whole project area, or multiple maps that show a more “zoomed in” view. Maps should be able to be zoomed in to a scale of 200 m/650’ or less.

For additional support in creating maps, please review [“Creating Project Maps: Instructions for Outdoor Recreation Grant Applicants.”](#) or [this overview video of how to create project maps in the ANR Atlas.](#)

Uploaded maps will need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- 2025_SitePlan_[Name of applicant organization]

Example Map File Name: 2025_SitePlan_Any Town

All facilities developed with assistance from LWCF must be designed in conformance with the appropriate current design standards for the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-480); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the Americans with Disabilities Act. In the application, applicants are required to describe how access requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) are being addressed in this project.

Permitting

All projects must have all necessary permits in place prior to construction – whether or not you own the land or are only working within the existing footprint. For state permits, the first step is to put the project through the [Permit Navigator tool](#), which is found on the Department of Environmental Conservation website. Alternatively, if your project is linear or crosses multiple parcels, you'll need to complete a [Project Review Sheet](#).

If your scope of work has not changed, resubmit the same Permit Navigator Report or Project Review Sheet from the Pre-Application phase. If anything in your scope of work has changed (ex: location of activities, type of work planned), you MUST submit updated permitting results. See the [2025 LWCF Pre-Application Guidance](#) for a review of the Permit Navigator steps, if needed.

For all construction projects, you must complete the Permit Navigator or Project Review sheet for your project and submit a PDF of the results in your application. You can find detailed directions about both of these tools in the [Pre-Application Guidance](#). If you do not submit this by the deadline, your application will be incomplete. The main exceptions to this are:

- For projects on USFS land:
 - Submit the official USFS Environmental Decision Memo which documents the environmental assessment of the project area. Obtain USFS Environmental Decision Memo documentation from the designated authorized official at USFS who will oversee this project. Applicants will also need to share the contact person at USFS who will oversee the work described in this LWCF application.
- For projects on State land:
 - Submit a letter of support from the State employee responsible for managing recreation on the land utilized in this proposal. This could be the district recreation specialist, district stewardship forester, park manager, or other State land manager. This State contact will be responsible for overseeing environmental reviews and the permitting process and will provide notice of environmental review completion to the Applicant and FPR's grant management team.

If your project qualifies for one of the exceptions outlined above, please upload the letters mentioned above in the Permit Navigator/Project Review Sheet upload section.

If you have other documentation that provides the same content as the Permit Navigator/Project Review Sheet, such as a written report of permits required prepared by a professional contractor, please contact ANR.FPRrecreationGrants@vermont.gov about whether or not to submit this documentation instead of the Permit Navigator/Project Review Sheet.

Reminder: Because Project Review Sheets require DEC staff involvement, be sure to start this process as soon as possible! At a minimum, you should begin at least one month before the deadline if you made any major changes in your full application proposal.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to follow up with the DEC Specialists identified in the reports before completing the application to determine whether or not permits will be required. In addition, Permit Navigator and Project Review Sheets only list potential state-level environmental permits. Check with your municipality to see if any other permitting is required.

Remember: Permit Navigator Reports and Project Review Sheets identify which state permits are potentially required for a project – they are NOT actual permit applications.

Submit documents that are clearly titled using the following format:

- LWCF Permit Navigator Results - [Name of Applicant]
- LWCF Project Review Sheet - [Name of Applicant]
- LWCF Permit Statement – [Name of Applicant]

Example Permit Report File Name: LWCF Permit Navigator Report – ABC Town

In the application form, you will also be prompted to provide a brief summary of your steps **to date** to obtain any necessary permits.

Example “To Date” Permit Steps: Calling Permit Specialists, receiving confirmation from the Permit Specialists that an XYZ permit is not required but that an ABC permit is likely, hiring a contractor to complete additional surveys, preparing and submitting permit applications currently under review, changing construction materials or design based on permit requirements, updating timeline and budget to account for permit requirements.

If no permits were identified in your Permit Navigator or Project Review Sheet, simply state that in the open-ended permit progress question.

Remember: If your Permit Navigator result or Project Review Sheet identifies permits that will be required for your project, be sure to include **future plans** to secure those permits in BOTH your workplan and budget.

Proof of Ownership

To demonstrate adequate control and tenure over the property to be within the LWCF 6(f) boundary area, applicants must upload documentation about the proof of ownership. This generally includes a copy of the deed.

You should also upload documentation about any potential encumbrances that could impact the work location, including easements, deed restrictions, and rights of way. These restrictions could either positively

or negatively influence recreation at your site – whether the project is occurring on land owned by the applicant or another entity.

If you do not already know this information, you must do some research! Potential questions include:

- Is the landowner already aware of any restrictions? Use this as a starting point – but this should be confirmed through further research.
- Was the property previously acquired with assistance from a nonprofit, such as VHCBC, Vermont Land Trust, or the Nature Conservancy? These types of acquisitions frequently include easements or deed restrictions.
- Is there anything recorded in the deed, such as a restriction or right of way? If there are deed restrictions, please be sure to call this out in the comments section.
- For public land projects: is this project taking place within an existing [LWCF 6\(f\) boundary](#)? Check the [list of previously funded LWCF projects](#). If the parcel is within an existing LWCF 6(f) boundary, you can upload a signed copy of the previous 6(f) map or other LWCF document (such as a grant agreement). If you know this site is within a 6(f) boundary and you do not have a copy of any of the original grant documents, be sure to identify this in the comments.

For projects that occur on state and federal lands, applicants should submit a copy of a signed lease that extends at least 25 years into the future. As these properties are generally already guaranteed to be open to the public in perpetuity, often the manager of the public land writes a [letter of support](#) that also states the applying organization has permission to complete the proposed project. This is especially important to secure if your project will create or expand a 6(f) boundary.

If there is an easement on the property that clearly allows for perpetual public access and use pursuant to the LWCF Act, you should submit a copy of the easement documentation. However, if it is not clearly stated in the easement that allows for certain recreational activities or project activities, applicants should submit both a copy of the easement and a [letter of support](#) from the easement holder. Previous examples of projects that need this additional letter have included easements that allow for recreation access but do not address whether or not new construction is allowed and easements that are more focused on conservation with minimal mention of recreation.

For combination Acquisition and Development projects: if your site development plan includes the to-be-acquired parcel, please upload a copy of the deed for the parcel to be acquired. You should also upload your Purchase and Sale Agreement or other documentation that demonstrates the current landowner’s commitment to transferring ownership.

You will need to upload copies of all ownership-related documents. Uploaded files need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- LWCF Ownership – [Type of Permission] – [Name of Landowner] – [Name of Applicant Organization]

Example Landowner Permission File Names:

- LWCF Ownership – Deed – ABC Town
- LWCF Ownership – Right of Way – Jane Smith - ABC Town
- LWCF Ownership – Lease – Town of Anytown – ABC Nonprofit

SECTION 5: Project Priorities

Connection To State, Regional and Local Planning Efforts

In this section, please share how planning this project has involved the local community. We want to hear about your project team, your public engagement efforts, how your project addresses local, regional and/or state plans. This section is worth up to 40 points.

Explain how your project will advance the [vision of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#) to foster healthy and vibrant communities through outdoor recreation. If the project addresses priorities in other local, regional, or state plans, describe how this project supports a specific goal or objective in the local town plan, regional plan, and/or another overarching plan for land, recreation, and trail management.

Two of the priorities of the SCORP are to invest in stewarding and upgrading existing recreational infrastructure and to develop recreational opportunities and conserve open spaces that strategically fill gaps in experiences and distribution across the state. Review in the full [SCORP Report](#) for additional information about these priorities. Some projects may accomplish one of these, while others may do both. Explain the unique gaps your project fills in your community and/or region.

Recognizing that many recreation projects happen in phases, if there is any additional work planned for this site within the next three years from the date of application, describe the other work and how it connects to your planned LWCF work. Be sure to describe all types of work – not just complementary recreation initiatives. Particularly if there are potential plans that might temporarily or permanently restrict public access or for non-recreation purposes within the 6(f) boundary, be sure to call those out. If there is no additional work planned for this site, simply name that.

Examples of Temporary Access Restrictions/Non-Conforming Use:

- Planned construction on main highway entry road will require park entrance to be closed temporarily.
- Use of parking lot within 6(f) boundary for construction staging for another project.
- Use of park maintenance shed for road salt storage while the permanent facility is under construction.

We also want to know how the community has been involved in the planning of this project. Describe outreach efforts, public meetings, surveys or needs assessments done to support this project, and how the results of your community engagement have informed your planning process. Be sure to call out any specific results that are relevant to your project and how they shaped your plan.

Example: “Our town surveyed current users of our multi-use path using a QR code posted along the trail from May-August in 2022. 70% of survey respondents reported seeing improper disposal of pet waste in the past month. Our plan includes adding new signage and pet waste receptacles every quarter mile along the 1.5 miles of trail within walking distance of large neighborhoods. We have also included plans for our maintenance team to restock pet waste bags and empty the

receptacles on a bi-weekly basis during the spring-fall and monthly basis in the winter to promote responsible stewardship.”

Letters of Support

To complete this portion of the application the applicant will need to upload a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3 letters of support that represent community support for the proposed project. Letters should describe how the proposed work reflects the community’s expressed recreational trail needs. Consider asking for letters of support from trail users, public, non-profit, and private sector entities.

Letters of Support	Letters of Commitment
Required. Minimum 1, maximum 3.	Optional. No minimum or maximum.
Gathered from community members and partners, focusing on the need for and importance of this project and/or the value of the project.	Written only by partners who will have an active role in completing or maintaining the project, as a confirmation of their participation.
Uploaded in the “Connection to state, regional, and local planning efforts” section.	Uploaded in the “Stewardship” section.

Application Tip: If your project involves work on state lands, be sure to get a letter of support from the State project Manager. So long as the letter includes both their support and a statement that they approve the work proposed in your application, the same letter can function as your landowner permission.

For projects related to [rail trails managed by VTrans](#) (ex: trailhead improvements or trail maintenance on the LVRT), be sure to include a letter of support from Jackie Cassino or other VTrans staff. If you already have a confirmed lease with VTrans, that should be uploaded along with your [Proof of Ownership](#) documentation.

Uploaded files need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- LWCF Letter of Support [Name of signee] – [Name of Applicant organization]
- LWCF Letter of Commitment [Name of signee] – [Name of Applicant organization]

Example File Name: LWCF Letter of Support – Ziek Smith, Chair – ABC Planning Commission

Stewardship

In this section, you will share how your project has been planned to promote future stewardship to ensure long-term accessibility with a demonstrated commitment to balancing natural resource protection with future recreational stewardship, management of trail access for trail users, and sustainability of the improved trail assets. This section is worth up to 30 points.

Climate Resilience Risk Form

The resilience of recreation projects is a critical component of the review process for FPR Outdoor Recreation grants, including LWCF. For this upcoming grant round, we are piloting a Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form to:

1. Provide FPR staff and the Ranking Committee with the information needed to assess the resilience of the project.
2. Help guide the grant applicant to develop more resilient projects.

You are required to submit the [Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form](#) with the Full Application materials. If nothing has changed in the project design, you may submit the same form submitted in the Pre-Application phase, but you may also adjust the answers based on feedback or updated designs. Review the [Guidance Document for Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form](#) for additional support related to this form.

If your project potentially includes multiple sections of locations, you may submit multiple copies of the form for each section. For projects with additional components/sections that will be done at a different time or with a different funding source, complete the Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form only for the segments/locations where LWCF work will occur.

For projects that only include Acquisitions, complete this form based on the final plan for the site within 3 years. For example, if you are planning to construct new facilities, complete this form as if you were preparing the form pre-construction for those facilities. If there are existing recreation facilities on the parcel that you will be opening to the public or if the parcel will open to the public for disbursed use, complete the form based on those existing use areas.

Application Tip: If FPR staff identified specific risk factors to address after the Pre-Application, we strongly recommend you incorporate that feedback into your full proposal.

Use for the LWCF Application

FPR staff will provide the completed Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form and the answers to the questions in the Full Application as part of the packet for review by the Ranking Committee. The Ranking Committee will use the answers to assess the resilience of the project. This will inform the points awarded to the applicant in resilience-related categories of the scoring rubric.

Example: If an applicant notes that there will be waterbars or culverts included in the project, applicants should describe how they will clean and maintain that infrastructure in their stewardship plan in the Full Application.

For the Pre-Application phase, we accepted “unknown” response options for all questions where it is provided as a response option (ex: are there muddy areas or areas where water puddles?) – but we strongly encourage applicants to be able to answer all questions before the Full Application deadline. If it was not possible to answer a question, please be sure to explain why in the comments.

Submitting a project that has potentially higher climate resilience risks does not necessarily mean that the project will not be selected. Rather, for projects that have higher climate resilience risk factors, we expect the design and stewardship plans to directly address the identified climate risks for those projects to score well and that the overall application will describe why the project is important despite the risk.

Example: If a project includes a trail bridge over a waterway, we expect the bridge to be intentionally designed to withstand flooding events as well as accommodate the expected load. Ideally, an engineer, river scientist, or other professional with expertise in this area will have been consulted to confirm this. Furthermore, justification of why the crossing is necessary in order to provide important recreation opportunities to the public should be included in the application.

Additional Stewardship Questions

You will also be asked to describe the potential impacts your project has on the natural environment and how you plan to mitigate those impacts in the DESIGN phase and then DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION. Describe how you will reduce potential impacts on the surrounding environment including rare, threatened and endangered species, natural communities, wildlife, water resources, historic and cultural resources, neighboring properties and other land uses.

Design Examples: relocation of a trail to be over 200 feet from a mapped vernal pool, reconstruction of an eroded trail to reduce sediment loading in a stream, redesign of a water access area to move people away from a known population of rare plants, rerouting a trail to avoid a stone wall, designing a new trail to avoid multiple stream crossings, adding restrooms in high use areas to prevent water-quality impacts.

During Implementation Examples: siting a staging area for equipment on previously disturbed areas like a parking lot or old log landing, using existing trails or roads to access the project site, setting up fencing to protect water resources from siltation during construction, filling in holes created by excavating rocks from project area, timing construction so it occurs outside of the bird breeding season, closing trails to users seasonally in deer overwintering areas, brushing in any trails or disturbance created during construction after the project is complete.

All recreation resources require maintenance. Use this section in the application form to describe your plans to ensure future maintenance within the 6(f) boundary after the project is done. What types of maintenance work do you anticipate, how frequently and why? Who will be responsible for maintaining the

resources? Describe any partners, if applicable, who will be part of these maintenance plans and any documented commitments they have made related to maintenance (e.g. written agreement, memorandum of understanding, co-signed land management plan).

If any components in your proposed project will help reduce future maintenance, be sure to briefly describe that in this section - particularly if those components cost more. For example, if you are installing a poured playground surface instead of mulch so you don't need to replenish mulch annually or are installing an artificial turf soccer field to reduce routine mowing and reseeding costs, be sure to name that.

Then, describe your plans for visitor use management. How will visitors learn about allowable recreation activities, user responsibilities, safe facility use, resource protection, and respect for landowners and other recreation users? How will you manage potential increases in use? What is your plan for handling user group conflicts if they arise? User group conflicts could include any instances where multiple groups might have potentially contradicting needs. For example, with a project installing new pickleball courts, pickleball users might want extended hours to use the courts, while local residents want restricted hours due to sound concerns. Please describe your plans for identifying and mitigating any such conflicts.

If external partner organizations will be critically involved in implementing the work, we recommend securing letters of commitment. The application provides the option to upload them in this section. Different from a letter of support, these letters confirm that your partners are aware of the planned work and are pledging their commitment to participate as described in the proposal. If you do NOT have external partners that will help implement the project, do not upload anything for this question.

Wellness

In this section, you will share how your project greatly improves access, removes barriers, and creates safe, sustainable, and welcoming outdoor recreation spaces. This section is worth up to 30 points.

Describe why this trail project is important to your community. Recognizing that there are parks that need work all over the state – and many times multiple parks within a single community that could use support—why should this one, in particular, receive LWCF funding? How does this project create and enhance in-community outdoor recreation opportunities that directly connect to where people live, learn, and work? If applicable, describe:

- Any information about past community use and support, such as trail counter data or the number of requests you've received from community members.
- Any critical linkages to natural, scenic, historic and/or agricultural destination areas, parks, forests, recreation areas, schools, jobs, developed growth centers, designated downtown areas, trail systems, long-distance trails, or trail networks.
- Any relevant information about the demographics of community members most likely to use this park.

Many trailheads, water access sites like beaches and boat launches, and parks in Vermont lack the information or physical infrastructure to invite people of different backgrounds and abilities to use them and feel safe. Priority investments in entry spaces include clear signage in multiple languages, detailed maps, clean bathroom facilities, parking lots that accommodate increasing use, and accessible design including designated parking spaces. These investments will help people who are new to outdoor recreation or exploring a new activity feel safe, welcomed and informed as they begin their outdoor adventure. Explain how this project creates safe, welcoming, and environmentally sustainable entry spaces into the outdoors.

Recreational trails have the potential to provide social, economic, and public health benefits. But they are not equally distributed. Low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, people in larger bodies, speakers of languages beyond English, and populations with disabilities have often been left out of the planning and decision-making process of trail development.

FPR seeks to address these inequities to ensure that recreational trails throughout Vermont are extended to all residents. As such, an application must describe to what ends a project is seeking to help create equitable access, especially for underserved communities. You can help make a difference by demonstrating how your project can facilitate equitable and just public access, use and development of recreational assets across Vermont.

SECTION 6: Compliance Information

This section will provide an overview and commitment related to state and federal compliance.

If selected, grantees will need to provide the following documents (do not submit these with your application – just consider them when answering the yes/no questions regarding compliance):

- **[Act 154 Certificate of Good Standing](#)**: This is for the applicant to certify that they are currently in “good standing” with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets pertaining to Vermont Water Quality Standards prior to receiving an award. This is a requirement for all State-issued grants with State funds.
- **[Vermont FPR State Risk Assessment Questionnaire](#)**: This is used to determine whether a potential grantee has sound financial management and if the grantee uses accounting systems that are adequate to meet the State of Vermont administrative requirements. The results of this risk assessment will inform the payment provisions in your grant agreement.
- **[W-9](#)**: A completed W-9 form must be physically signed and dated within the last 12 months of submission to grant staff. The State of Vermont will not accept digital signatures on a W-9. If you need assistance completing the form, contact your accountant or tax preparer.
- **Certificate of Insurance (COI)** – Grantee must demonstrate standard insurance coverage is in place before a grant agreement can be signed. Additional insurance may be required, depending on circumstances, but minimum requirements for coverage and documentation in a Certificate of Insurance are described in [“A Vendor Guide to FPR Agreements: Insurance Guidance.”](#)

If the organization applying for this funding cannot meet the fiscal compliance requirements above, please consider an alternate fiscal sponsor for your project. If you are selected for a grant and cannot meet the fiscal compliance requirements, you will not be awarded a grant.

Application Tip: Do NOT submit these materials with your application. FPR staff will reach out and request these materials when necessary. In your application, you simply need to confirm whether or not your organization can comply with these requirements.

Procurement and Purchasing Provisions

In addition, if awarded, you will need to comply with your organization's procurement policies or use the [State's procurement and contracting procedures](#). You also must comply with the LWCF grant agreement payment provisions (see [Sample 2024 LWCF Grant Agreement](#)) about how you document your purchases for reimbursement. Backup documentation must be maintained, and depending on the provisions in your grant agreement, potentially submitted with each reimbursement request. Examples include copies of invoices, labor reports/forms, timesheets, or other acceptable timekeeping records. You do not need to provide any additional documentation at this time – in your application, you simply need to confirm whether or not your organization can comply with these requirements.

Deed Restrictions

The intent of the LWCF program is to protect public lands for outdoor recreation for perpetuity (i.e., forever). To ensure future owners know the land has LWCF-protected status, all land acquired or developed using LWCF funds is recommended to encumber the property deed(s) with specific protection languages. In

general, this is expected for new acquisitions. FPR will work with development project sponsors to determine feasibility on a case-by-case basis.

Encumbrance language:

“As stated in Section 6 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (Public Law 88-578, as amended), property acquired or developed with Fund assistance shall be retained and used for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity. No property acquired or developed shall not be wholly or partly converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior. Approval of the National Park Service must be granted prior to any action taken.”

Federal Grant Compliance

As a federally funded program, all LWCF projects are considered federal actions. As a federal action, all projects must demonstrate compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act; Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act; Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; and federal accessibility requirements.

Additional Information: For full details of environmental review and federal compliance, be sure to read the [Federal LWCF Manual](#). In particular, review “Proposals, Environmental Review and Federal Compliance” (Chapter 4).

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Additional Information: For full details of NEPA requirements for LWCF Projects, review the [National Park Service NEPA Handbook](#). The categorical exclusions (CE) for NPS projects are outlined in Section 3.3 of this handbook.

Many LWCF projects will be classified by NPS as categorically excluded from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This means they meet criteria for a NEPA categorical exclusion (CE), which typically involves actions in the proposed project area that do not have a significant environmental impact.

However, before any agreement is executed and before beginning any work, a project sponsor must still document compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Federal Executive Orders related to federal wetlands, endangered species, clean water, clean air, and obtain all necessary State and local permits to satisfy the State’s permitting processes. If the impacts of a project are unknown or could potentially cause a negative environmental impact, further steps are required.

The NPS offers three NEPA analysis pathway options:

- Documenting the categorical exclusion through the NPS submission package, for projects that, under normal circumstances, do not have the potential for significant environmental impacts.
- Environmental Analysis (EA), if the potential impacts of the project are unknown, the actions do not meet the criteria of a CE, or the proposed project does not fit within a single CE category.
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), if the potential for significant impact to the human environment exists

FPR will work with selected applicants to navigate the NEPA process for this grant during summer 2025. That said, we know that some projects have already initiated environmental assessments for their sites. Please describe any work completed to date related to environmental assessment (an assessment of any possible contaminants, hazardous materials, pollution, or other issues) and/or safety assessment of the property. In addition, the application provides a space to describe any environmental surveys, such as wetlands delineation, soil sampling, water quality testing, and ecological surveys.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

If selected, your proposal will be submitted for review in compliance with [Section 106](#) of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470), which considers the effects of projects on historic properties and cultural resources. To complete the review, the state may require applicants to conduct additional archeological studies as necessary; this additional study is called an Archeological Resource Assessment (ARA). In addition, if the project involves impacts to a structure that is more than 50 years old, a review of the property may be required to determine if the structure is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Learn more about the [Management of Historic Resources at FPR](#).

To complete Section 106 review, you may be required to complete an ARA for new resource construction projects and for when a project area is within a potentially archeologically sensitive area. If you know your project meets either of these known conditions, please be sure to incorporate an ARA into your budget and workplan prior to submission.

If cultural and/or historic resource surveys have already been completed for your site, please upload those reports and summarize the findings in the application.

If you have not yet completed these types of resource surveys, in order to expedite that initial review to determine whether or not your project might need an ARA, please:

- Ensure your maps include staging and access areas, in addition to construction components.
- Answer the question in Section 6 to provide additional information about whether your project will have a known impact on any human-built resources more than 50 years old. Examples of human-built resources include buildings, signs, kiosks, fences, markers, bridges, culverts, guardrails, bridges, boardwalks, dams, and other similar structures. If the trail itself is more than 50 years old and you will not be impacting any other types of human-made structures, please select no.
- Answer the question in Section 6 about whether or not your project will only take place within an existing disturbed area. Examples of previously disturbed areas include preexisting trails and trailheads, Class IV roads, old logging or farm roads, plowed farm fields, or developed parks and playgrounds. If **any part** of your project will disturb more than five feet outside of a previously disturbed area (including access routes or staging areas), select yes to this question – and then share a description.
- *If you answer yes to either of the questions in the Section 106 review section, please upload photos if available of the planned work site, access roads, and/or staging areas in “SECTION 7: Supplemental Information.”*

Endangered Species Act

For LWCF projects, the most common potential impact on endangered species is removal of trees over four inches in diameter, which could specifically impact Northern Long-Eared Bats. Prior to grant agreement development, FPR staff will complete the online [Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\)](#) tool from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help with the federal environmental review process. Complete the required questions to provide the information we need to complete the Endangered Species Act Review.

SECTION 7: Supplemental Information

Use this section to upload any additional information that will be helpful for the evaluation of the proposed project. These materials should help the review committee better understand your project but will not be specifically used for any points in the review process.

Required materials to upload in this section, if applicable:

- Proof of flood insurance if your project is located within a designated flood hazard area.
- Use schedule for school facilities or any other facilities that will have significant access restrictions.
- Landowner appraisal waiver letter for acquisitions valued \$10,000-\$25,000, if applicable and not previously submitted.

Common examples of optional helpful supplementary materials:

- Copies of estimates referenced in your budget.
- Additional design plans, structural drawings, or example images of your intended design.
- For replacement requests: photos of the current assets to be replaced.
- Any completed NEPA, permitting, Section 106 documents not previously submitted.
- Building floor plans, if any structures will be included in your project.
- Conceptual design plan for acquisition-only projects that show future plans for the parcel.

Recommendations for submitting supplemental files:

- Submit only file types that are accessible through commonly available software, such as .doc, .docx, .xls, .jpg, .png, and .pdf files. If you submit specialty file types, such as .heic (iPhone photo default format), .numbers or .pages files (Apple software), be aware that not all reviewers will be able to access your materials. **FPR will not convert your files to different formats for reviewers.**
- You are only able to upload individual files, not zip folders.
- **Be sure to use descriptive file names so that it's obvious what type of information is in each file.**
 - Rename files with nondescriptive default names, like "IMG_4826" or random-looking combinations of letters and numbers prepopulated by a scanner.
 - If possible, include a year or date with your file name and the name of the applying entity

Example Supplemental Document File Names:

2025_Photos_Any Town
2025_Bridge Design_ABC Nonprofit
2025_Sign Concept_ABC Nonprofit
2024_Budget Estimates_Any Town

Application Tip: More supplemental information is not always better. Reviewers will access all your submitted application materials in a single folder, so try to combine similar supplemental items into a single file so that reviewers can find what they are looking for! For example, if you have multiple estimates to back up your budget estimates, combine them into one PDF with the estimates in the same order as your budget lines.

Review and Submit

We know that the application is long and a lot of work, but please take the chance to review the application in detail. It will be much easier for you to add documents before submitting them than for us to ask for them later. Applications that are incomplete after the application deadline will not be considered.

Once you have double-checked your application, use this section to certify that the form is complete and accurate, and then submit the LWCF grant application form for grant program staff to review.

Be sure to save a copy of your responses in a separate document prior to submission.

Please note: Any work you perform filling out a form will not be accessible by grant staff until you actually submit the form in the 'Certify & Submit' step. At the time of submission, it will be transmitted to grant staff and it will become part of the public record, accessible per the Vermont Public Records Act.

After You Submit: Viewing or Revising Your Application

After you have submitted your application, you wish to review or download your submitted materials – or potentially revise your submission:

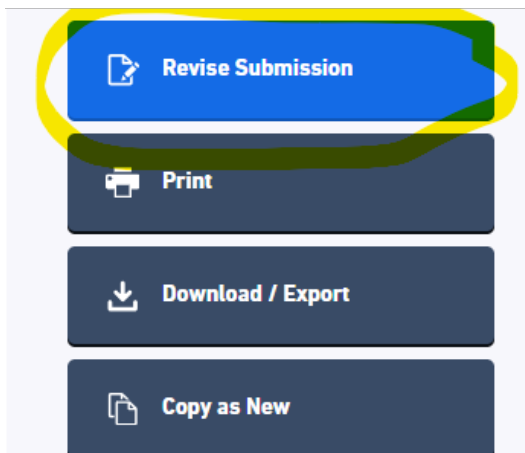
1. Go to <https://anonline.vermont.gov/>
2. Log into your account using the "Sign In" button on the right
3. Go to "My Submissions"
4. Select the proposal you'd like to edit by clicking the blue arrow next to where it says "Submitted"

11/22/2023 3:15 PM

SUBMITTED



5. Once you're in, you can review your submission by clicking the blue "View Form" button on the top right.
6. If you would like to make any changes, you should see a blue button on the right that says, "Revise Submission." **Once you click this button, your application will no longer be considered as submitted.**



7. You can make any desired edits and then you **must resubmit** by the deadline - 11:59 pm on March 15, 2025 – for your application to be considered.

Additional Requirements for NPS Submission

Projects that are recommended for funding by Vermont's LWCF Ranking Committee will be sent to the National Park Service for final approval. FPR compiles materials from project applications and completes federal forms for each application. The Divisions for Historic Preservation, Water Quality, and Fish and Wildlife review the proposed projects and sometimes make recommendations. From the date applications are sent to NPS for approval, sponsors should expect to wait 1-6 months or more for approval to be sent back to FPR.

If your proposal is selected by the Ranking Committee, the FPR grant staff will reach out for your assistance in preparing the final NPS submission package. **As the NPS submission requires additional information that does not factor into Vermont's initial review process, we only request this content from finalists. We will work on preparing this package after projects have been recommended through our review process.** The exact list of requirements for each applicant will be determined after the final selection based on each individual project and the content of the submitted application. The general requirements include but are not limited to:

- Scheduling and participating in a pre-award site visit with FPR staff in summer 2025.
- Securing and submitting documentation to satisfy all [state and federal compliance](#) needs.
- Assisting FPR staff in completing the Application and Revision Form. FPR staff will complete as many sections as possible based on your application content. Applicants will be required to provide answers to all remaining required questions.
 - All applicants moving forward to the NPS submission stage will be required to assist FPR staff in preparing Section 3.0, C. Environmental Resources Survey of the [Application and Revision Form](#).
- Updating or providing any missing [application attachments](#).
- Signing select documents to be submitted to NPS. FPR will send these through DocuSign.